

News

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN OREGON: FOURTH QUARTER 2004

Clackamas County records fastest wage growth
Washington County has highest average weekly wage

In the fourth quarter of 2004, the average weekly wage in Oregon rose 3.5 percent over the year to \$719, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that Oregon's wage growth was one of the slowest in the nation, ranking 48th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and that its wage level was \$93 below the national average of \$812. Among the State's six large counties, those with 75,000 or more jobs, wages grew fastest in Clackamas County rising 5.0 percent over the year; even so, the wage gain was still below the national increase of 5.7 percent. Average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2004 exceeded the national level in only one county, Washington, at \$906. (See Table 1.)

Over-the-year wage changes

Clackamas County's 5.0 percent wage gain in the fourth quarter 2004 ranked 178th highest among the nation's 317 large counties. Jackson and Lane Counties, with matching 4.4 percent wage gains, ranked 219th. Multnomah County with a 4.2 percent increase ranked 237th. Washington County's average weekly wage advanced 1.6 percent, the slowest increase among the six large counties in Oregon and one of the slowest rates of growth in the nation at 307th.

Leading the nation in average weekly wage growth was Williamson County, Texas, with an increase of 17.8 percent. Rock Island, Ill., was second with 14.8 percent growth, followed by the counties of Ventura, Calif. (12.6 percent), Henrico, Va. (12.5 percent), and St. Louis, Minn. (11.0 percent). At the bottom of the rankings were five counties that experienced wage gains of 1.0 percent or less: Kalamazoo County, Mich. (0.5 percent), Richmond, N.Y. (0.7 percent), Macomb and Genesee, Mich. (both at 0.9 percent), and Ingham, Mich. (1.0 percent). No large county experienced a decline in its average weekly wage.

At the statewide level, the average weekly wage in Oregon grew 3.5 percent from the fourth quarter of 2003 to the fourth quarter of 2004, well under the 5.7 percent national pace. (Rhode Island also had a 3.5-percent wage gain and, as a result, an identical ranking of 48th.) Only Vermont (2.3

percent) and Michigan (3.3 percent) had slower wage gains than Oregon. Minnesota led the U.S. in over-the-year wage growth at 7.5 percent. Delaware and Virginia were next in line with increases of 7.0 and 6.9 percent, respectively. These states were followed by California (6.7 percent), Hawaii (6.6 percent), and Idaho (6.6 percent). (See Table 2.)

Wage levels

Of the six large counties in Oregon, Washington County and Multnomah County had average weekly wages above the national average of \$812 for the fourth quarter of 2004. Washington County's wage level ranked 58th highest among the 317 large counties nationwide. Multnomah County's wage was similar to the national average at \$815 and ranked 110th. Clackamas County's wage level averaged \$752 and ranked 170th. Average weekly wages in the three remaining counties -- \$643 in Lane, \$628 in Marion, and \$597 in Jackson -- all fell in the bottom quarter of the nationwide rankings.

Among the 317 large counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,608. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,460, followed by Fairfield, Conn. (\$1,430), and Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,363). Three of the ten counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), three others were located in or around the San Francisco, California area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco), while three more were located in or around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top ten was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area. At the other end of the wage scale, the lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas (\$500), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$504), Webb, Texas (\$540), Yakima, Wash. (\$541), and Horry, S.C. (\$558). The wage level in the lowest ranked county, Cameron, was less than one-third the level reported for the highest ranked county, New York.

On a statewide level, the average weekly wage in Oregon, \$719, was 11.5 percent below the national average. Still, this placed Oregon near the mid-point in the rankings at 27th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Oregon's weekly wage was greater than in neighboring Idaho (\$618, 47th), but was below levels in the other nearby states of California (\$928, 6th), Washington (\$790, 17th), and Nevada (\$768, 20th).

Nationwide, average wage levels were greater than \$1,000 per week for the top five in the rankings: District of Columbia (\$1,305), Connecticut (\$1,056), New York (\$1,016), Massachusetts (\$1,007), and New Jersey (\$1,001). Average weekly wages in this group were more than 20 percent above the national average. At the other end of the scale, four states reported wages below \$600 per week -- or less than 75 percent of the national average: Montana (\$572), South Dakota (\$581), Mississippi (\$586), and North Dakota (\$599).

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws. The 8.5 million employer reports cover 131.6 million full-time and part-time jobs. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. Over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas,

counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not necessarily match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2004 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the fourth quarter 2004 version of this news release. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2004* will be available for sale in late 2005 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250, telephone 866-512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104. Also, the 2004 bulletin will be available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn04.htm>.

QCEW-based news releases issued by other regional offices have been placed at one convenient BLS Web site location, see <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewregional.htm>.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the San Francisco Information Office at 415-975-4350 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. PT. This release is available in text and PDF format on the San Francisco BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/ro9/home.htm>. Users may also obtain the release from the Bureau's fax-on-demand service in San Francisco by dialing 415-975-4567 and requesting document number 9680.

NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series. The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review, and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered¹ employment and wages in the United States and six largest counties in Oregon, fourth quarter 2004²

| | Employment December 2004 (thousands) | Average Weekly Wage ³ | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | Average Weekly Wage | National ranking by level ⁴ | Percent change, fourth quarter 2003-04 ⁵ | National ranking by percent change ⁴ |
| United States ⁶ | 131,560.7 | \$812 | | 5.7 | |
| Oregon..... | 1,623.5 | 719 | 27 | 3.5 | 48 |
| Clackamas, OR..... | 141.5 | 752 | 170 | 5.0 | 178 |
| Jackson, OR..... | 82.2 | 597 | 306 | 4.4 | 219 |
| Lane, OR..... | 143.4 | 643 | 280 | 4.4 | 219 |
| Marion, OR..... | 129.8 | 628 | 290 | 2.4 | 297 |
| Multnomah, OR..... | 429.6 | 815 | 110 | 4.2 | 237 |
| Washington, OR..... | 231.3 | 906 | 58 | 1.6 | 307 |

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

⁵ Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for any noneconomic county reclassifications.

⁶ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered¹ employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2004²

| | Employment December 2004 (thousands) | Average Weekly Wage ³ | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | Average Weekly Wage | National ranking by level ⁴ | Percent change, fourth quarter 2003-04 | National ranking by percent change ⁴ |
| United States ⁵ | 131,560.7 | \$812 | - | 5.7 | - |
| Alabama..... | 1,882.0 | 695 | 32 | 5.8 | 21 |
| Alaska..... | 288.4 | 780 | 18 | 4.4 | 43 |
| Arizona..... | 2,459.0 | 752 | 23 | 5.9 | 17 |
| Arkansas..... | 1,149.1 | 623 | 45 | 6.0 | 14 |
| California..... | 15,163.8 | 928 | 6 | 6.7 | 4 |
| Colorado..... | 2,181.7 | 830 | 14 | 5.9 | 17 |
| Connecticut..... | 1,663.8 | 1,056 | 2 | 6.3 | 12 |
| Delaware..... | 418.0 | 883 | 7 | 7.0 | 2 |
| District of Columbia..... | 659.6 | 1,305 | 1 | 5.5 | 28 |
| Florida..... | 7,729.7 | 736 | 24 | 6.5 | 7 |
| Georgia..... | 3,916.5 | 772 | 19 | 5.0 | 34 |
| Hawaii..... | 603.0 | 723 | 26 | 6.6 | 5 |
| Idaho..... | 597.8 | 618 | 47 | 6.6 | 5 |
| Illinois..... | 5,773.7 | 877 | 9 | 6.0 | 14 |
| Indiana..... | 2,883.9 | 706 | 31 | 4.6 | 42 |
| Iowa..... | 1,441.9 | 667 | 36 | 6.5 | 7 |
| Kansas..... | 1,317.5 | 668 | 35 | 5.9 | 17 |
| Kentucky..... | 1,761.9 | 679 | 33 | 5.3 | 31 |
| Louisiana..... | 1,890.3 | 658 | 39 | 4.9 | 38 |
| Maine..... | 600.9 | 661 | 38 | 4.8 | 40 |
| Maryland..... | 2,506.0 | 879 | 8 | 5.8 | 21 |
| Massachusetts..... | 3,169.2 | 1,007 | 4 | 5.6 | 26 |
| Michigan..... | 4,348.5 | 835 | 12 | 3.3 | 50 |
| Minnesota..... | 2,635.3 | 835 | 12 | 7.5 | 1 |
| Mississippi..... | 1,116.7 | 586 | 49 | 4.8 | 40 |
| Missouri..... | 2,670.4 | 709 | 30 | 4.9 | 38 |
| Montana..... | 409.3 | 572 | 51 | 4.2 | 44 |
| Nebraska..... | 891.8 | 648 | 41 | 5.7 | 24 |
| Nevada..... | 1,186.1 | 768 | 20 | 6.5 | 7 |
| New Hampshire..... | 624.0 | 840 | 11 | 6.5 | 7 |
| New Jersey..... | 3,964.7 | 1,001 | 5 | 5.7 | 24 |
| New Mexico..... | 773.2 | 645 | 42 | 5.0 | 34 |
| New York..... | 8,466.9 | 1,016 | 3 | 5.8 | 21 |
| North Carolina..... | 3,844.9 | 714 | 29 | 5.2 | 32 |
| North Dakota..... | 326.2 | 599 | 48 | 6.4 | 11 |
| Ohio..... | 5,350.3 | 754 | 22 | 5.9 | 17 |
| Oklahoma..... | 1,458.8 | 627 | 44 | 5.0 | 34 |
| Oregon..... | 1,623.5 | 719 | 27 | 3.5 | 48 |
| Pennsylvania..... | 5,573.2 | 796 | 16 | 6.0 | 14 |
| Rhode Island..... | 482.6 | 765 | 21 | 3.5 | 48 |
| South Carolina..... | 1,811.0 | 655 | 40 | 5.0 | 34 |
| South Dakota..... | 371.2 | 581 | 50 | 3.9 | 47 |
| Tennessee..... | 2,704.3 | 728 | 25 | 5.5 | 28 |
| Texas..... | 9,479.9 | 800 | 15 | 6.1 | 13 |
| Utah..... | 1,100.6 | 664 | 37 | 5.2 | 32 |
| Vermont..... | 304.7 | 676 | 34 | 2.3 | 51 |
| Virginia..... | 3,568.2 | 841 | 10 | 6.9 | 3 |
| Washington..... | 2,718.0 | 790 | 17 | 4.1 | 45 |
| West Virginia..... | 695.4 | 620 | 46 | 5.6 | 26 |
| Wisconsin..... | 2,755.2 | 719 | 27 | 5.4 | 30 |
| Wyoming..... | 247.9 | 641 | 43 | 4.1 | 45 |

¹ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

² Data are preliminary.

³ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

⁴ Ranking does not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

⁵ Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.